

## **Guest Column**

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### **Recovery of protected species a rare, wonderful thing**

**By Dave Allen**

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A rather unique event is taking place today (July 24) in Douglas County: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is removing the Douglas County population of Columbian white-tailed deer from the federal list of protected species.

The deer have recovered to the point where federal protections are no longer necessary. Rebounding from the brink of extinction, this species has expanded its range and shown a steady increase in population size since it was listed in 1978 as a threatened species.

Responsibility for this success story is shared by many partners, most importantly Douglas County and its citizens, who contributed to the deer's recovery either purposely or unintentionally. Without your support and patience, this recovery couldn't have been accomplished. You can be very proud.

The recovery of a species that once faced extinction is a rare and wonderful thing. Our other partners played a big role, too: the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, which did most of the day-to-day "heavy lifting," and the Bureau of Land Management, which provided much of the land that assures the deer will have a safe home.

I extend my personal thanks to all who have worked so long and hard to bring us to today's event. This couldn't have been done without you! The recovery we celebrate today is a perfect example of accomplishing what Interior Secretary Gale Norton calls conservation through consultation, communication and cooperation.

For a minimum of five years, the Service will monitor the Columbian white-tailed deer population in Douglas County, again with the help of our partners at the federal, state and local levels. This post de-listing monitoring will ensure that the population continues to recover without the federal protective status it has enjoyed for 25 years.

It is my fervent hope the monitoring of this population will show continued success. There are still details to be worked out as we develop a monitoring program for the deer and we look forward to working with all our partners to devise a system that works best.

Frankly, the Service doesn't have a lot of experience monitoring recovered species. The citizens of Douglas County will have a ring-side seat in that fledgling monitoring effort, just as you have had a close look at the 25 years of the deer's recovery. You will be helping us break new ground.

This next phase should be exciting and rewarding to everyone involved. We in the Fish and Wildlife Service look forward to sharing it with you.

*Dave Allen is the regional director of the Pacific Region for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*